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COUNTRY USSR (Komi ASSR)

REPORT

SUBJECT Forced Labor Camps for Women
in Vorkuta

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Information

SOURCE EVALUATION: INFORMATIONIVE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE

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1. [] three labor camps for women in the immediate vicinity of Vorkuta;

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- a. Brickworks No. 1 located 30 to 40 minutes east of the city.
b. Brickworks No. 2 located about one and one-half hours northwest of Vorkuta.
c. Brickworks No. 3 located within the city. []

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2. The brickworks were regime camps with organization and administration similar to that of other regime camps. The prisoners were assigned to heavy and light brigades, Intrad-brigades (sic), and invalid groups, and the assignments were reviewed every quarter.

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3. Brickworks No. 1 was a former men's camp converted to a women's labor camp in August 1949 or earlier. In 1950, it was occupied by about 500 women, of whom 150 worked in the brickworks and clay pits. The remaining inmates were employed outside the camp, principally in digging ditches for water pipes from Vorkuta to the camps. The ditches were 3.3 meters in depth. The work was particularly difficult, since it could be done only in winter, because of the abundance of ground water in the rich clay soil during the warmer months of the year.

4. Brickworks No. 2 was a former German PW camp occupied by approximately 1,000 women. The barracks were in better condition, and light and water facilities were better than in Brickworks No. 1. The inmates were employed in the brickworks, in clay pits, and in procuring ballast for railroad construction and building operations. The ballast work was very strenuous, consisting of loading stones washed up by the spring flood waters of the Vorkuta River, coupling the heavy dump carts in which they were transported to the place where they were to be used, tending the dredger, and re-laying the cart rails when the work site was transferred.

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(Note: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#".)

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5. Of the 1,000 women in Brickworks No. 2, 200 were under treatment for tuberculosis. About half of the latter patients were ambulant. Accident cases were frequent because of the heavy work required of the prisoners. Cases of malnutrition were rare, as were also infectious diseases. In two years, there were only two cases of typhus in the camp. Venereal diseases, abortions, and pregnancies were frequent, as a result of familiarity between guards and prisoners. Pregnant women were sent to a special camp, where the work was lighter. A mother was allowed to remain with her child two years, at the end of which, the child was placed in a nursery and the mother was returned to her original camp. She received photographs of the child and reports of its development and occasionally was permitted to see it.
6. Industrial plants in Vorkuta included, besides the brickworks, a cement factory near Brickworks No. 2 employing only men, an electric power plant, and a factory where electrical equipment, light bulbs, and electric wire were produced.

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